

Public Comment
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TO: Negotiated Rule Making Committee

SEP - 9 2008

Outer Banks Group

My name is Earl Younce Jr. I am a second generation owner of the Avon Motel and Cottages located on the oceanfront in Avon. My family has operated these businesses for over 50 years; and we are an integral part of the community with deep roots here.

Some of our customers have been patronizing our facilities since they were established those many years ago. The overwhelming reason many of our patrons return year after year is for the peaceful tranquility and for the sheer beauty of nature in all its splendor. Most of the people who stay with us are also ORV enthusiasts who enjoy fishing, kite boarding, surfing, wind sailing, boating, shelling and other beach related activities.

This year with the emergence of uncertainty over whether or not these time-honored traditions will be allowed to continue in the future, we are experiencing unprecedented cancellations and loss of business. Our reservations and total business decline is in the 30-40% range. These losses are directly related to the numerous and unpredictable fluctuating beach closures that have occurred since the control of the national seashore has been taken over by special interest groups. This trend of lost business is not unique to my own. Other tourist dependent businesses such as souvenir/gift shops, tackle shops, restaurants, realty offices, who I have talked to, have experienced similar or even greater loss of revenue.

In addition to my personal losses because of this situation, not only does my family suffer in many ways, I have sixteen employees who depend on our being a success to survive. For example, the manager of our motel, for the past 12 years, a single mother of 5, depends on this business, as well as my maintenance man and his wife who cleans, and have 4 small children, all under the age of 11 depend on our survival. This is just one example of how important this is to everyone. When business is in a decline such as it has been, I have to make hard decisions sometimes on who I can afford to keep on. This hurts families and our economy in general.

My guests tell me its not the economy in general or high gas prices that is their main concern. Beach access is their sole reason for coming. Some of my guests, due to beach access closures, have told me that they will never return. Just to name a few, an 86 year old man who has been staying at our establishment for 48 years has now decided he will not return due to the closings. It is under the interim plan (the park service was responsible for administering) there was plenty of compromise allowing plenty of reserved space for wildlife while allowing plenty of access for beach enthusiasts. I feel park service, not special interests groups, should decide, with public involvement, how the beach should be managed. I believe in co-existing along with respecting all of nature's creatures (even if they are not "endangered"). But after all is said and done, this is supposed to be a national seashore for the enjoyment and use of the citizens, as well as myself, my family, and all the local people of the island who have provided and want to

provide the type of place people love to come to and also the jobs for those who choose to love this wonderful place as we do in a way that we can all enjoy the beach together. I am sure there can be a compromise with the park service and the people of this great island without special interest groups who's only interest is to save a bird and kill an island!

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